

result of increased job opportunities in the county. This is especially true with twenty (20%) of the population fifty-five (55) years and older. Table 6 shows the age distribution by percent for Jackson, surrounding counties and North Carolina.

The median age of the population for the State of North Carolina has been increasing over the past seventy (70) years. The median age has risen from 18.8 years in 1900 to 26.5 years in 1970. Jackson County's population has a median age of 24.7 years, less than that of the state as a whole. This lower median age for the county is due in large measure to the large number of college students in the county. Table 7 shows the median age for both the State and Jackson County.

POPULATION, 1970-1972

According to statistics compiled by the North Carolina State Board of Health Jackson County has been increasing slightly (2%) in population since 1970. Table 8 shows the natural increase (births minus deaths) and the total increase (natural increase plus net migration) for the county. If the natural increase is subtracted from the total increase, the result is the amount of net migration for the county for 1971 and 1972. These figures should be considered only as estimates. These figures indicate that the county is continuing to gain population.

Another method of estimating population increases is by the number of electrical connections made in the county since 1970. Table 9 gives this information as compiled by the Nantahala Power and Light Company. The Power Company points out that these figures do not distinguish between new connections and re-connections. It also does not give the type of structure, whether commercial, industrial, or residential. For these reasons these figures are almost surely high for the actual population of Jackson County. These figures